VCNO: Navy's Task Force Greyhound 'A Strong Approach' to Ship Maintenance

The guided-missile destroyer USS Fitzgerald (DDG 62) arrives at the port of Pascagoula, Mississippi. in 2018 aboard the heavy lift transport vessel MV Transshelf, to begin restoration and modernization work at Huntington Ingalls' Industries shipyard. *U.S. NAVY / David L. Stoltz*

ARLINGON, Va. – The vice chief of naval operations (VCNO) told Congress that the Navy's experiment with an alternate ship availability maintenance concept based on the Forward Deployed Naval Force model is worth pursuing.

The concept, called Task Force Greyhound, was conceived by Rear Adm. Brad Cooper, then-commander, Naval Surface Force Atlantic, as a way to provide fleet commanders "a predictable and sustainable model to maximize warships ready for operational tasking," according to a March 5 Navy release.

VCNO Adm. William K. Lescher, testifying June 9 before the Readiness subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee and responding to a question from Rep. Elaine Luria, D-Virginia, about the model, Task Force Greyhound, said the concept is about responding "to an operational need for readiness in our cruiser-destroyer ships in Norfolk [Virginia] and Mayport [Florida] with a small pilot [program]."

The pilot is a departure from the Optimized Fleet Response Plan (OFRP) by providing more frequent but smaller, incremental availability periods for ship maintenance and upgrades. The model is similar to the maintenance plans for Navy ships forward deployed to Japan and Spain, for example.

"We will move forward to do this tailored maintenance, this

excursion from OFRP, both to generate some increased operational availability in [cruisers and destroyers] and then to learn," Lescher said. "It is not a complete no-brainer. There is some learning to be involved in terms of what it means to the executability of the maintenance.

"But we think it's a strong approach and it reflects, to your point, much of the conversation we had about other excursions off the OFRP baseline," he told Luria.

Lescher said "from a budget perspective, it [the Task Force Greyhound concept] is essentially budget neutral."

Luria, a former naval surface warfare officer, said she was encouraged by the Task Force Greyhound idea.